1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 remarkably tame. Our diet was, alas, almost entirely confined to chicken, and we ate so many that we exhausted the supply of the immediate neighbourhood and fowls had to be brought in to us from distant villages. When they arrived carried in open-work baskets they would just be thrown out in front of the house; they would wander about the neighbourhood picking at the plants and occasionally flapping over the fences which shut in the fields; but they never tried to get away and every evening would come under the house for the grain they were given and would roost quite happily in the strange building. They very seldom run away and children can quite easily pick them up in their hands.* In the late evening the sight under the house where a number of animals are gathered together is very strange; cattle, pigs, goats, hens, dogs and cats are all tangled up in a heap sleeping on top of one another. Children have absolutely no fear of domestic animals, [857] and one of the favourite games of little boys of five and six is to play at butting matches with young goats.

462 Animals must never on any account be killed by a woman; this is the only complete and absolute prohibition of any form of activity for either sex. There are some acts which are more commonly or indeed exclusively practised by men or by women only, but there is no sort of prohibition for members of the other sex doing them if they feel so inclined. For example only women spin and only men weave baskets; but there is no reason why a man should not spin if he wanted to and knew how, and in point of fact some women do weave baskets and mats. There are some things which women's relative lack of strength prevents them doing, particularly dealing with the big blocks of wood necessary for house building; that is considered a natural limitation and is not a cultural law. Men are expected to be better tree climbers than women, but there are quite a few cases of women being more efficient at this than their husbands; the husband feels no humiliation at this superiority on the part of his wife nor is he laughed at by other members of the community; if anything he is rather lucky in having an exceptionally able partner. But for the killing of animals the prohibition is absolute. It would be a sin to eat, even unknowingly, an animal killed by a woman, though in that ease the lamas can cleanse the unwitting offender by ceremonies and offerings

262 673

[757] * There is an odd variety of fowl with almost black flesh and skin and a great number of rudimentary feathers. Although the colouring does not alter the taste this type is despised and is only used as a cure for orchitis.

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replied that since the woman had herself come and implored him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible. A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies. When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain. These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more than this he would not say. The same evening, when they were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near. His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time, but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's

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he said that while there was no particular harm in other people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them, except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be angry and refuse in future to help him: moreover, he was in the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters. The body is always buried and not treated in any special way. Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

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224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con- [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall- [157] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth, [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

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its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals. It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its

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853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when the child is eight months old and should be complete by the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842 child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
787 cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals, and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage. Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of "bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others. The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

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that owing to the heavy rain of the last few days a great deal of the path has disappeared, as a result of which it will take us another two days to reach the monastery. Also, there has been heavy snow on the pass above, so that it is not yet possible to get from Talung over to Lachen. In view of the weather, which shows no signs of abating, everyone thinks the best course is for us to get out of this valley as quickly as possible, and we accordingly left at six-thirty, deciding to make a day of it and go straight through to Mangen, which we eventually reached at six in the evening. It looked at first as though the weather would clear, but by nine it was only too obvious that my mind was definitely not in accord with Tafoor's: it never ceased raining throughout the day. We decided to keep to the far side of the river, as the path was said to be slightly better. It turned out to be little used, as a result of which we appeared at times to be struggling through virgin jungle. It was impossible to keep the leeches away, and after the first hour or so I gave up trying. Whenever we came to an open patch the coolie who was with me took out his knife and scraped them off my legs: they were so thick that they looked like bunches of worms. It was really a waste of time, for five minutes later they were just as thick as before.

By midday we were opposite Lingtem again, where there was another bridge to cross. I had been dreading this all the morning, but actually I found it comparatively easy; having done it once gave one confidence.

We struggled into Mangen just as the mail was arriving. Nothing much to read, except my pass-book, which, as usual, shows me to possess even less than I imagined. I was wet through to the skin and had no change of clothes, so spent the evening dressed in a magnificent fur-lined sort of mandarin's robe of crimson silk, which Palden managed to borrow from a local Kazi. The coolies arrived at ten p.m.

4th June:

I was unable to move yesterday owing to my legs having